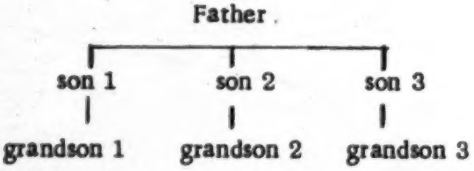
where they enjoy great esteem and are consulted every time on decisions concerning all the family, [91] such as the marriage of a child, because this is a matter of alliance with another tribe, or such as moving the village. Young people of a poor family who get themselves adopted may be incorporated into the family and assimilated among its children. The adopted son (ntob) gets a wife from the head of the family which has taken him in. This wife, however, is only loaned to him, and the children whom he may have do not belong to him and are regarded as being of the adopter's family whose name they receive.

Each family has a fetish all its own, which is handed down through the oldest sons. It is often a reed (ayan) which is planted behind the huts of the village where the family lives, by a practitioner in the course of an important ceremony. The practitioner digs a hole, puts into it the bones of a member of the family killed by the bivur, spits onto it some wild pepper that he has chewed, and, before planting the reed, says, "ke nzue, ke wone, me nga non we bemvama e dzam ese dzah bor yüi, o ke sile e yenege" (without stealing or hiding myself I have taken from my ancestors, so that everything which will be asked of you by this family shall happen). The reed must be treasured and constantly kept clear of weeds which might grow around it. A fowl is sacrificed to this reed by the head of the family every time he wishes to undertake an important matter, and when the village moves the plant is taken along with the bones and replanted.

Social Life. Pahouin society is limited to a group of families which make up the tribe. The latter originates from a single family, the sons of which have left to establish other families in their turn. The separation occurs almost constantly in the third generation. The formation of a tribe may be diagrammed thus:



Grandson 1 establishes a family which keeps the name of the founder; grandson 2, a family which will take the name of this grandson; and

613 the same for the third grandson. The group of the sons' three families
614 constitutes what is called etuña or aval. The tribe (ayoñ) gives its name to all the families which have been established since its founder.

614 Social relations are rare with foreign tribes, the tribe forming a
609 homogeneous whole where the stranger is received only with reserve
578 and when he shows goods which prove that his visit has no other aim but to come and look for a woman to marry. The [92] tribes are often hostile to one another, and while they no longer can make war, this hostility is still demonstrated by an atmosphere of haggling which always forces the weakest to give way. Several tribes have thus had to leave the N'Djolé region to settle farther downstream on the Ogooué because they could no longer live beside their neighbors.

574 On the other hand, visits among members of one tribe are frequent, presents are exchanged, and wives are bought.

761 Death (awu). Death is regarded as a change of village. After his
775 death, a person has become an inhabitant of the big village created by Nzame beyond the earth. There he will find the members of his family who already live there, and therefore he follows a very wide trail which leads him to the bank of the river Endam where his relatives who died before him come to await him. It may be that the crossing of the river is not immediate, and the dead man may have to stay for several days on the bank, which happens especially to people of whom the bivur have made human victims.

763 The dying person (edzeġela) is attended by women who, when death has occurred, announce it on coming out of the hut, where all the inhabitants of the village then assemble. The corpse is taken from its bed and laid on the ground on mats; it is washed, rubbed with oil, and clothed in a white loincloth, then rolled in the mats and in pieces of bark, and tied. It stays this way in the hut until the grave is dug.

764 Funeral ceremonies immediately follow death. The wrapped body is carried by two men to the place of burial. The inhabitants of the village follow, one behind the other, and are present at the interment, which is done with a vine holding the body so that it does not fall suddenly to the bottom of the hole dug to receive it. The grave is oriented east-west, or is dug parallel to the course of the river which flows by the village, the head of the dead being placed upstream or to the east, the feet downstream or toward the west, so that the dead will lie in the direction of the river Endam. Before the grave is filled,

was explored and then occupied only at a late date. These conditions delayed "contaminations" and permitted the maintenance of a certain unity. It now has a viable economic structure, thanks to its cacao production, which has finally created a true peasant state. [79]

1. Bitam and Minvoul Districts

These two districts are wedged between the Cameroons to the north, Spanish Guinea to the west, and a true "no man's land" to the east. The inhabitants, numbering 27,500, are the most active and prosperous elements (producing three quarters of the cacao grown in the region) on the roads serving the Cameroons and the center of Oyem. They have built modernized villages "tied" to the cacao plantations. Their inhabitants belong to groupings found in the Cameroons and in Spanish Guinea, and some of the villagers have relatives in one or the other territory — like so many links favoring traffic in "merchandise" and ideas.

According to the census of 1936, the only detailed document, 27 clans or tribal fragments (clans that have maintained the tribal name) are now there. The most numerous clan is that of the Effak (Yénzòk tribe), (1) which has more than 15 percent of the population,

1. We give the tribal dependencies with all reservation. The near ignorance and "cheating" allied to the movement of clan regroupment render all certainty impossible, except when we have access to early documents, more particularly to a mention in the notes of Monsignor Martrou, which were kindly lent to us at the Libreville Mission.

followed by that of the Eba (Yémisèm tribe), which has 10 percent. The other groups may go down to a few tens of individuals. In this region are found the following tribes (ayog): Yénzòk, Yémvôg, Yémisèm. These are the most important in the Cameroons in the

619 Ebolowa and Sangmélima regions (2). The whole of Upper Woleu-
615

2. Documents relating to "ethnic groupings," Administrative Archives of Ebolowa.

N'Tem is oriented toward the Cameroons with which it has not
[439] only economic ties (it exports its cacao there and imports its goods) but also political ties (which explains why it served to relay the directives and their implementations that appeared in this territory).

2. Oyem District

162 This district, with 30,000 inhabitants, has a long frontier with
361 Spanish Guinea, and is crossed by the Woleu River, an important
439 means of access to this possession. The major part of the population (more than two thirds) is "stuck" to the frontier. This is understood because related groups exist on each side of the frontier; [80] [Fig. 1] [81] Guinea has always exerted an economic attraction (it is the center of trade and exchange of labor which is much in demand), she serves occasionally as a place of refuge. The vil-
[433 lagers are fairly well-to-do because of the cacao cultivation (one
511] fourth of the Woleu-N'Tem production) and because of the trade with Guinea (peanuts, coffee, palmetto). This is shown particularly by an improvement in housing.

162 Kyé-Nyé Canton, a meeting place of two migratory streams
619 coming from the Lower Cameroons, contains by itself nearly
615 12,000 inhabitants who again are distributed by clans (Fig. 1). The dominant groupings are the Esengi (Yémvôg tribe), who account for more than 40 percent, the Kojé for about 25 percent, and the Yéngwi for over 15 percent. In the canton of Woleu, the villages of the Ozip tribe are dominant, accounting for 33 percent of the population. Then the Bökwé (Ndôg tribe) account for about 12 percent, and the Esamökos (Yéngól tribe) (1) for more than 10

1. Only confirmed by the notes of L. Martrou.

162 percent. Only the Koǰe (more than 90 percent of the population)
619 and the Ožip form the Canton of Oyem. In Bissok Canton, the
●614 population is dominated by the Yéngwi and Yémisèm tribes, while Ellelem Canton is characterized by a sprinkling of groups: 17 clans or tribal fragments for 3,200 inhabitants, where the Bökwé (allied to the Ndôg tribe) alone assert themselves, although apparently numbering less than 25 percent.

361 Oyem District shows a great homogeneity, which is found
184 nowhere else in Fang country in Gabon. Its greater population density, its relative prosperity, the fact that it is centered on Oyem, an important administrative and market town, these facts explain the prestige it exerts on Fang villagers and its present-day political vitality.

3. Mitzic District

162 With 11,000 inhabitants belonging stricto sensu to the Fang
361 group (2) this district occupies a position which lends itself badly to

> 2. We designate as Fang the restricted whole which bears this sole name – a migratory group according to us.

the stabilization of a population. It opens on three zones of attraction: the Ogooué, the coast, and Spanish Guinea. It has played the role of thoroughfare and was profoundly disturbed during the famine years (1922-23, 1925-26). It is barely beginning to modernize its economy by the installation of cacao plantations. [82] Besides being the least populated district, it has the worst demographic situation, the lowest birth rate, and the smallest child population. Although the people have settled along the roads (as is clearly shown when present-day maps are compared to early ones), the villages have remained unstable and very small, consisting of
361 composite groupings. An investigation of 50 villages spread along
614 the two roads show that they have in their midst 30 clans or tribal
619 fragments. At the time of the recent regrouping of clans, the most

361 active tribes were the Yémvóg, the Yémödâg, the Ndôg, the
●614 Yéngwi, and the Yémisèm. They are also the ones which reveal a
619 tendency to dominate. If Mitzic could have been considered the "geographic center" of Fang country, it would be difficult now to find for it any other significance.

4. Médouneu District

162 Reduced to a single canton this cistrict has less than 3,500
361 inhabitants It is maintained because of its position on the
619 frontier and because of the network of tracks used by traders which run directly to Lower Gabon and Libreville. The Oyék and the Effak are the most numerous groups, making up 13 out of the 37 villages scattered throughout the district.

361 We have applied ourselves with great precision to this whole region not only because our investigation was carried out chiefly in the Woleu-N'Tem villages, but because it plays a primary role in the development of Gabon. Its chief town, Oyem, competes with Libreville in imposing its directives on the whole Fang country. Its richer economy and better demography (the population density is more than 6.5 inhabitants per kilometer (1) make

1. Map of Captain Roussel (completed in 1912) and surveys of itineraries in the Oyem District

it a center of vitality. Closely allied to the Cameroons (from whom it receives suggestions of policy) and opening onto Spanish Guinea, it nevertheless preserves a sense of unity and a certain special spirit.

Region of the Ogooué-Ivindo

162 This region has neither the ethnic unity (it is a zone of
361 multiple contacts) nor the demographic importance (35,600 inhabitants scattered throughout three districts) of the preceding one. It is isolated and without [83] economic development; its isolation has made it a zone of refuge in a period of uncertain peace.

563 who, being related to the coastal minorities, constitute the "aristocratic race" of the country, and, having become relatively hierarchical, has known how to "preserve its position." (2)

2. Rapport Ogooué-Maritime [Maritime Ogooué Report], 3e trimestre [Third Quarter], 1935.

162 Though the Fang "have settled in a haphazard manner and a little everywhere," they have nevertheless formed two important centers of population, on the Ogooué above Lambaréné and in the area around the southern lakes. (3) They represent more than 35 percent

3 Rapport. Ogooué-Maritime [Maritime Ogooué Report], 4e trimestre [Fourth Quarter], 1935.

of the population (17,500 inhabitants) in this district of multiple ethnic groups, which in 1936 had one fifth of its inhabitants settled at the lumber works. The Fang villages here consist of 35 clans or 621 615 619 fragments, about half of the population forming a homogeneous clan, while the other [85] half is composite. Apart from the Yémvòg, most of the existing tribes are not found (or are unimportant) in the Woleu-N'Tem [region]. The most numerous elements seem to originate from the Ivindo. Although they reached the region forming the present-day district of Port-Gentil at the end of their push, the Fang have not succeeded in evicting the dominant ethnic groups, the Ouroungou and the Nkomi.

Region of the Estuary

162 We have already stated that the date of the arrival of the Fang at the Estuary can be set at 1850. At that time they replaced the residual coastal groupings, particularly the Bakélé who, after abandoning the Ogooué, had to leave the Como. Since 1900 the population of this region has been "nearly entirely composed of

162 Pahouin." (1) They occupy the districts of Kango and Cocobeach

1. Archives de Libreville [Archives of Libreville], 1900-1910.

(6,000 and 7,500 inhabitants); they represent more than 95 percent of the district of Libreville, if one discounts the foreign "workers" hired under contract. They have imposed themselves on Libreville (to the detriment of the aboriginal Mpongwé), where they form nearly 40 percent of the population and are dominant in 15 out of 23 sections of the town. This hold over the chief town of the territory is proof of their conquering activity.

361 In the district of Cocobeach, more than 20 clans or tribal
●615 fragments are present, especially Oyèk (a tribe found also at Médouneu and particularly in Spanish Guinea) and Effak This region, which in the past was important as a commercial center, is without any trade, and the administrative reports stress the
[161] depopulation movement which is taking place. (2)

2 Cf. especially Rapport politique [Political Report] 1937, Department of the Estuary, giving a special analysis of the causes of the very high infant mortality.

162 Kango District at the tip of the Estuary is one of those where the
361 demographic decline is the most marked. If the census of 1936 is
615 accepted, there are 25 clans and fragments The most numerous
619 group, that of the Yéngü, accounts only for about 10 percent Libreville District, having incorporated the former subdivision of Chinchoua, exhibits a Fang population divided to the maximum This last region is characterized by a [86] veritable crumbling of the group. The 1943 census shows 54 clans and tribal fragments (with 3,500 inhabitants), of which only 8 contain more than 150 persons. This is also the region which has been most emptied for the benefit of the capital, where the natives of the former subdivision of Chichoua represent nearly 7 percent of the population.

162 In the part of the district that corresponds to the former subdivision
361 of Libreville, the Fang group is much more homogeneous. The
●619 Oyèk are dominant with 45 percent of the villagers, then come the
619 Ntum numbering 20 percent, and the Effak (Yénzɔk tribe) with about 12 percent. Nine other groupings represent from 4 5 percent (Esisis) to 1. 5 percent (Omvâg) of the population of this former division. Like Chinchoua it has suffered under the attraction of Libreville.

361 If the Estuary region has been affected demographically during
619 the last fifty years, it does not seem to have changed from the point of view of clan composition. The archives of the former Como Circle [administrative unit] (1) show that the groupings now

1. For which very precise reports were drawn up in 1905 and 1909.

considered the most important constituted villages known during the years 1900-10. However, two essential differences appear: these groupings at that time existed almost isolated and not at the level of dozens of little groups. They were localized rather definitely along the banks of the rivers, whereas they are now scattered. The villages they formed were larger than those of the present day. We have thus an indication of the process of atomization which took place during the first half of this century.

One is at first astonished at the complexity of the Fang country Outside the Upper Woleu-N'Tem, clan groupings do not appear within the limits of even small regions; they form villages which are often far apart from one another; they are scattered and intermixed. As a matter of fact, only the village grouping and the land it uses can be located on the terrain. Moreover, it is necessary to specify that the latter was stabilized, and a limit set on its mobility only at a very recent date. The fragmentation is at its maximum at the extreme end of the Fang migration, in the coastal districts and in the "zone of contact" [87] created in the surroundings of the Middle and Lower Ogooué. An average volume by clan could be calculated for each region which would give figures between

361 a minimum of 64 in the former subdivision of Chinchoua and a
614 maximum of 1,000 in Kyé-Nyé Canton, (Oyem District), and in the villages situated on Bitam-Minvoul. Thus the reality and effectiveness of the clan groupings are very different according to different sections of the Fang country. Hence, it can be understood that attempts to renew the clans could only take place in regions where such a grouping still has vitality. It should also be noted that the highest average volume by clan occurs in the regions where the Fang population is greatest and where the demographic
184 situation is the most favorable. The centers of vitality are located in in the Woleu-N'Tem [area] (a large part of the district of Mitzic being excluded) and in a small zone in the neighborhood of Libreville. These two regions compete to extend their influence over the whole of the Fang country, the rivalry appearing in the elections when a candidate from Libreville is opposed by one from the Upper Gabon (legislative elections of 1951). And it can be understood that the Fang country as a whole does not show everywhere the same degree of change in the traditional social structure nor the same capacity to adapt itself to present-day conditions.

167 By transferring to a map the groupings estimated in each of the
178 districts, other facts become clear. The direction in which the dis-
614 persal took place becomes manifest. Thus the Effak coming from the frontier of the Cameroons passed by the outskirts of Spanish Guinea to reach the coast near Cocobeach and Libreville; the Angonâmvé coming from the Woleu-N'Tem reached the Ogooué (they were found in the section of N'Djolé at the beginning of this century), then Lower Gabon beyond Lambaréné, etc. Moreover, some groupings did not spread out and were found only in relatively definite regions: the Oyèk in Spanish Guinea and in the French districts south of this territory (Médouneu, Cocobeach, and Libreville), the Kojé at Bitam and Oyem, the Ožip only at Oyem, etc. Finally, certain minor groupings existed only on the frontiers of the Fang country and had an independent existence. The Yengwi of Oyem remember that one of their fragments emigrated towards Kango (without knowing either the exact name or place), but none of the groupings taken by the census in this district claim a common

origin with the Yengwi of the Woleu-N'Tem. Thus [88] this last link has disappeared – the only link observed at the beginning of this century by an administrator who claimed there was an "extreme" breakup of groupings which were scattered "hundreds of kilometers from one another." (1)

1. Captain Maignan, "Etudes sur le Pays Pahouin [Studies of the Pahuin Country]," dated 1912 and published in the Bulletin de la Société des Recherches Congolaises, 14, 1931.

This fragmentation and entanglement of Fang groupings can be explained by the recent character of the migrations across Gabon and the search for economically advantageous spots, and by the pacification which makes the cohesion of numerically strong groupings no longer necessary. These were also noted by the first observers: Maignan speaks of "families camped near the Ivindo" who "have felt the need to unite in order to defend themselves from the attacks of their neighbors and who have remained united, forming uninterrupted lines of villages." (2) Finally, the role of

2. Op. cit.

the administration must be stressed; a policy of recruitment in order to have manpower at hand in the administrative centers; the reaction of certain groupings which consisted in running away from administrative ascendency ("as soon as a position is created in a populated region, a vacuum occurs in the twinkling of an eye around it," writes Périquet in a Mission report) (3); a policy of stabilizing

3. Captain Périquet, Mission d'étude du chemin de fer du nord [Mission to Study the Northern Railroad], 1910-1911.

the population for purposes of road building and regrouping of villages (1930). The nomadism of the Fang has been the despair of the

167 administrators. But outside these most evident causes, others of
178 an internal nature giving rise to this fragmentation must be con-
●619 sidered. We must retain the idea of a maximum capacity of village grouping which we will enlarge upon in the study of the social structure.

The successive ruptures of the groupings and the multiple migrations make it difficult to understand precisely the nature of the present-day groupings scattered throughout the Fang country. As for the several large groups usually recognized, we have suggested that they were migratory groups which moved at different periods after having been subject to different cultural influences, and having been the first to have occupied the Fang country in Gabon (which would explain the attempts of earlier observers to define a division into "lands"); and we have shown how their significance has become blurred. (See pp. 4-8 .) We have the proof that these names are subsequent to [89] the tribal and clan names (at least those of the oldest clans). In the Ožip there are collected groupings calling themselves Ntumu, Fang, and Maké (1); Tessman places the Ntumu and Fang in two different

1. Tradition des Ožip [Tradition of the Ožip], Administrative Archives of Oyem.

groups, the Ndôg and the Bökwé, (2) According to our investiga-

2. Tessmann, op. cit.

tion (confirmed by various observers), it is a question of a Ndôg tribe of which the Bökwé (a corruption of the word Ebikwe) are a clan. Curault gives another example of this: at the beginning of the century a tribe, Okana, at N'Djolé had "produced" clans called Bétsi, Maké, and Nzaman. (3)

3. Captain Curault, "Monographie du secteur de N'Djolé au Gabon [Monograph on the Section of N'Djolé in Gabon]," op. cit.

167 If we go by the names taken in the census, we note that
178 names of different formation designate groupings that are apparent-
●619 ly identical: some of the names begin with Yé or a consonant, the others begin with Esa (ésé, isi) or Eba (ébi), the names in the form of ésà or éba being the most numerous. The word ye (meaning "valley") is accompanied by a qualifier often referring to a plant, an animal, or a natural phenomenon (yé-ngwi (the boar), yé-mvâg (the rain), etc.). The prefix ésa or éba (meaning "begetter") is used to designate the posterity of a more or less remote human ancestor We must therefore surmise that in this last case we are dealing with names designating more recent groupings of secondary formation: clans and lines of descent, The other names refer to ancient groupings whose origin is legendary, who in the past were localized, and who split up and scattered due to multiple migrations; that is, they refer to tribes. The first to observe the Fang, Trilles and Martrou, are positive about these facts. So are the tribal traditions: that of the Yénzǒk has preserved the memory of the first division into four clans which occurred after crossing the Sanaga River (4) (principal halting place of the

4. Traditions des Yéndzǒk [Traditions of the Yéndzǒk], Administrative Archives of Ebolowa, the French Cameroons.

migrations which distributed the Fang throughout the South Cameroons and Gabon). Each important halting place of the migrations accentuated the fragmentation and created new pre-eminences. Such is the case of the Yénzǒk. The crossing of the Sanaga led to a division of the groupings which are still called Yénzǒk; the crossing of the N'Tem (which gives access to Gabon) resulted in the establishment of the large Effak grouping, [90] which divided to reach the coast in subgroupings who call themselves only Effak. (1)

1. Table of the "tribes and subtribes" set up by the Fang of Lower Gabon for the Commission of the Historical Investigation of Libreville.

167 Relations between groupings resulting from such successive
178 ruptures have fallen off and finally disappeared in many cases.
● 6/9 This is because of the conflicts which were often the origin of the fragmentation, because of the distance between fragments, and because of the situation resulting from colonial occupation which brought about peace so that "strong tribal solidarity" was no longer essential. (2) Other reasons are control of collective movement

2. L. Martrou, "La langue Fan et ses dialectes [Fang Language and Dialects]," Journal de la Société Africanistes, Vol. 6, p. 2, 1936.

and establishment in the interior of administrative districts which have finally brought about very localized associations. A proof of this falling off is found by comparing the tribal compositions established by L. Martrou (on the Ogooué in the first decade of the century), by those responsible for the movement of clan regrouping (in Upper Gabon after 1945), and by the investigators of the "Commission of Historical Investigation" (in Lower Gabon in 1949). These documents show great divergences which can be accounted for by local circumstances. Taking advantage of this confusion the leaders of the clan movement have been able to set up regroupings which are very questionable from the point of view of clan logic. In addition, the fact that the groupings in the course of their migrations have changed their names (affirmed by L. Martrou, Maignan, and L. Mba) (3) tends to accentuate this con-

3. L. Martrou, op. cit.; Captain Maignan, op. cit.; and L. Mba, "Essai de droit coutumier pahouin [Essay on Pahouin Common Law]," Recherches Congolaises, 25, 1938.

fusion. It can therefore be understood that the limited and definitely located groupings have been for many years the only ones that are truly effective — and, at the same time, which enjoy a kind of independence.

619 this pre-eminence was also guaranteed by the possession of the skulls of ancestors (évora biéri), which were transmitted "from eldest son to eldest son." (4) Nowadays, because of the extreme

4. Idem., p. 113.

dispersal of the tribal fragments and the near-disappearance of the Biéri cult, because [103] of the small number of such groupings and the relaxing of relations between groupings, these clans do not have the benefit of a privileged situation and did not always play a major role at the time of the clan movement — some have even assimilated at that time by more vigorous tribes. (1) They were

1. "Such a group that believed itself a tribe (ayong) would find itself demoted to the level of a simple clan," writes the author of a Rapport sur le regroupement des Fan [Report on the Regrouping of the Fang], March, 1948.

not able to maintain the feeling of tribal reality or the solemn gatherings (ésama, ésulan) which confirmed this feeling periodically, while the Cameroons groupings, who were less divided and less scattered, have preserved them. This explains their exemplary role during recent years.

●619 The term "clan" therefore remains reserved for the groupings whose lines of descent go back to a real ancestor (ésa, the ésa being opposed to the mvam as "real kinship" is to "spiritual kinship"). These groupings express themselves locally far more than the tribe (by clan patches or echeloned villages), and have imposed a strict and unquestionable exogamy. They participate in the system of alliances set up by the interplay of marriage and have a special name — while the inferior groupings are not named The colonial administration knows the Fang groupings by their clan names and these have been used in taking the census. These names have a characteristic morphology because of their prefixes ésa or éba. The clans have also been subjected to rupture. Groupings

●614 issued from the lines which originally constituted them may be separated by great distances or may even be in foreign territory (in Gabon and in Spanish Guinea, for example). Nevertheless, whatever their average size, depending on the location, there remain a few groupings which are imposed on individuals in a specific way: particularly by belonging (one is an Esibil, Esakɔra, etc.) and by "fraternity" (expressed by the title mwananayôg), which they imply. The word ayôg is also used today to designate the clan. This seems to be its true original meaning; it has only taken on the nonspecific meaning to the extent that tribal reality became blurred at the time of recent migrations, resulting in the near disappearance of the word characterizing it (ayɔm). The value of this interpretation becomes obvious when one refers to the observations made by Tessmann, who, at the beginning of the century, pointed out the existence of groupings called ayôg who were more or less united at the higher level to constitute [104] [Fig. 4.] [105] the largest grouping, which he calls "tribe" (ayam). This confusion is significant of the profound upheavals that have occurred and explains the uncertainties shown by Father Trilles in this respect

614 776 178 This author, besides, has stressed the existence of a Fang totemism which could be seen [to extend] from the tribe to the individual, and extended out to the various groupings. But he also took care to point out that this was in the process of disappearing at the beginning of the century on the Ogooué and in the coastal regions. A valuable estimate has been made of this fantastic theory by Van Gennep, who writes: "All our efforts to limit the terms totem and totemism to a well-defined category are nonexistent for Father Trilles, who manages to make of the totem the equivalent of the Latin genius or of any other protecting spirit of any individuals or groups whatsoever." (1) We cannot discuss now an absolete

1. A. Van Gennep, L'Etat actuel du problème totémique [The Present State of the Totem Problem], Paris, 1920, p. 35.

quarrel – more especially as rapid changes during the last fifty years have changed or destroyed the elements necessary for any

614 opinion — but we can remember from the facts reported by Father
776 Trilles the indication that a protecting being, a body of religious
178 material (akamayon), a collection of symbols, and a body of beliefs and legends gave a uniformity, other than a genealogical one, to the Fang clans.

614 The agnate lines of descent with a more or less limited num-
621 ber of generations have played, and still play, an important role. Around them are organized the groupings forming the village or village groups which were established by the nomadic groups noted by the first observers. In this respect the history of progressive distribution throughout Gabon is significant. We will give the example of the Yéngwi, of which a fragment represented by twenty-five villages is established in the Oyem region in the Woleu-N'Tem. They are all attached to an ancestor called Esɔnɔ Angɔ, who is said to have come from the legendary place Adʒa Mbura and to have led the first journeys through the South Cameroons. He is still considered the founder (abial) of the groupings existing today. These, consisting of about 3,300 individuals, are especially concentrated in the southern part of Kyé-Nyé, Canton, north of the Woleu River. Starting from this region where the first Yéngwi villages were established and where a compact nucleus of more than [106] 1,500 individuals is still in existence, a great migration took place in the direction of present-day Spanish Guinea (in to villages) from the mouth of the N'Tem, the Ogooué, and the Gabon. The large grouping thus formed by the lines issued from Esɔnɔ Angɔ and settled at the level of a demarcated region constitutes an abial ɛ bɔt, or major linage. Although these lines are spread out through ten generations, there exist real bonds between members of the grouping, even if their "kinship" goes back to Esɔnɔ Angɔ, and which are sufficient to make possible the aggregation of dissident elements from one village to another.

The word abial implies an idea of localization. It may signify "place of birth," "place of origin." (1) The groupings called

1. Cf. Mgr. L. Martrou, Lexique Fãn-Français [Fang-French Lexicon], Paris, Procure Générale, not dated.

614 621 abial ɛ̀ bɔ̀t are distinguishable by a double criterion, one genealogical — a limited but definite localization. All those that we have studied in Woleu-N'Tem relate themselves to an ancestor who led the last migrations through the present-day Cameroons, and enabled (or realized) the crossing of the N'Tem, and to the first settlements beyond this river, from which each clan fragment spread out and migrated. In the case of the just mentioned Yéngwi, Esɔnɔ̀ Angɔ established the first village created south of the N'Tem; his two sons, Mɔnɔmvɔ̀gɔ Esɔnɔ (the eldest) and Nsim Esɔnɔ, after having lived for some time in the midst of the same grouping, separated and founded the first two Yéngwi villages of the Oyem region. From these two centers the lineages began to organize themselves independently, from the third generation on, and to distribute themselves as is shown in Fig. 5.

Before the administration had transformed, for reasons of its own benefit, the reality of the village, recomposing and displacing it, the village corresponded to the men issued from one line of descent, including a variable number of generations, and to those clients [dependents]. The Yéngwi village of Ebiane, for example, still includes the major portion of the lineage born of Egwaga Mɔnɔmvɔ̀gɔ, second son of Mɔnɔmvɔ̀gɔ Esɔnɔ, — which goes back for eight generations. The only unattached elements created the present-day small villages of Nkoum and Bibasse (22 and 65 inhabitants), which have remained on the outskirts of the original grouping. But the village itself, [107] [Fig. 5.] [108 and 109] [Fig. 6] [110] as soon as it has reached an average size, includes a definite number of minor lineages which represent the still present posterity of the group of real brothers and of half brothers (bɔ̀bɛ́nâg) who formed the initial cell. Ebiane has three of these minor lineages that coincide with the three lines of descent issued from the three sons of Egwaga Mɔnɔmvɔ̀gɔ, and are named after them. These are the previously mentioned nd'é bɔ̀t — this term containing the idea of descent, the minor lineages found at the base of the hierarchy of the groupings (see Fig 6, for an example of their distribution in the midst of a group of Kɔ̀jɛ villages established in the vicinity of Oyem).

Fig. 5.
Yengwi of the Vicinity of Oyem

614 Generations:

I

[108]

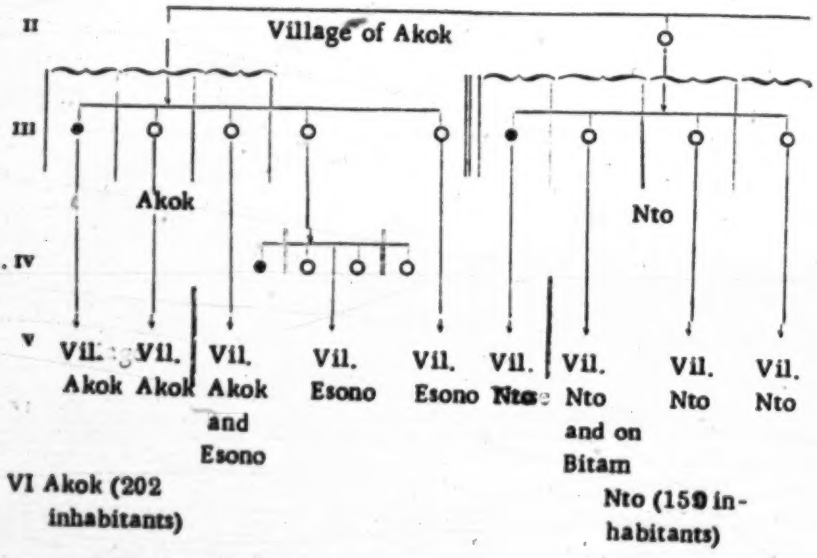
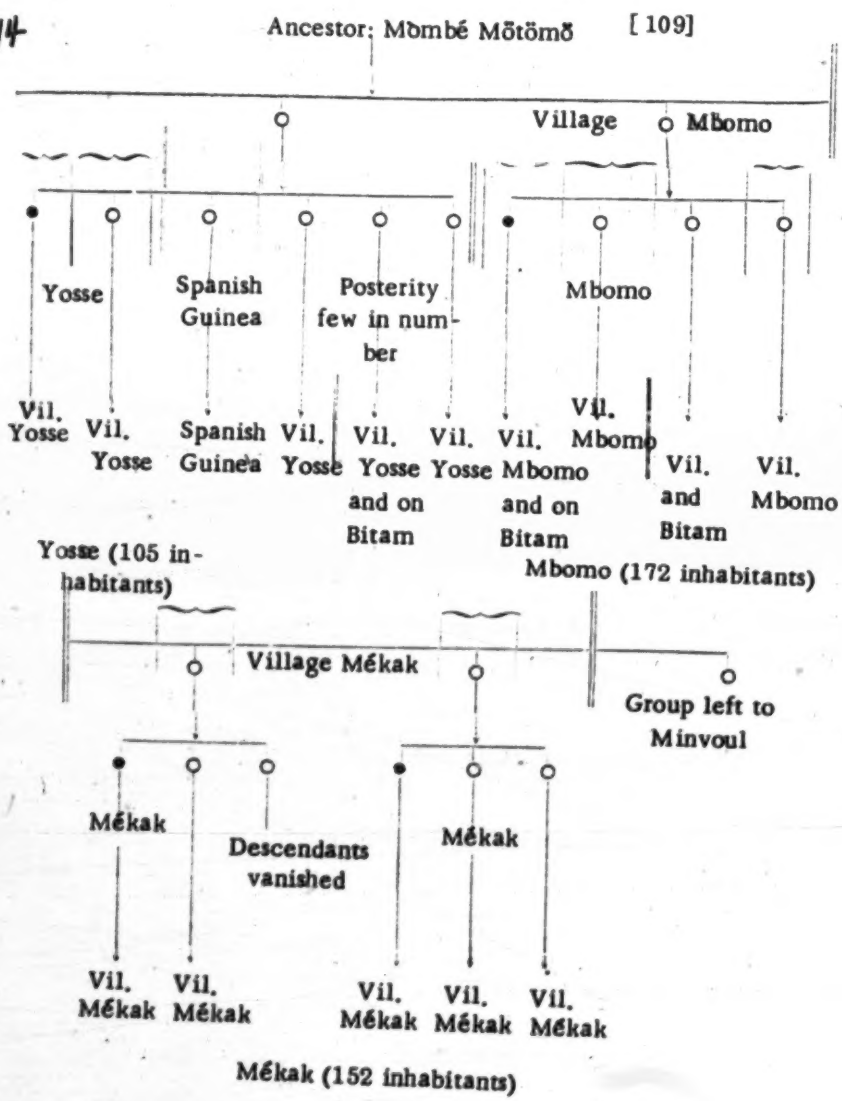


Fig. 6

Example of "fragmentation": Koé in the Vicinity of Oyem

Legend: Eldest brother
Younger brothers
nd'e bot recognized at the village level
Lines of fission.

614

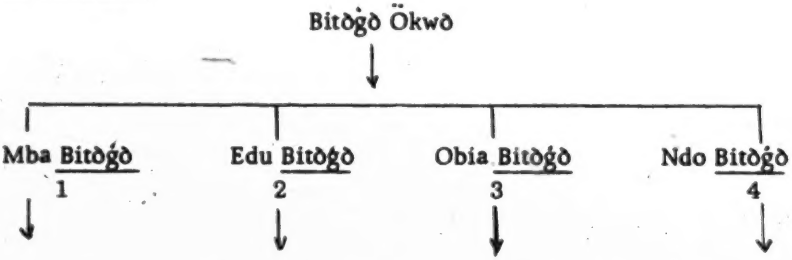

Ancestor: Mɔmbé Mɔ̃tɔmɔ̃ [109]
Village
Mbomo
Yosse
Spanish Guinea
Posterity few in number
Mbomo
Vil. Yosse
Vil. Yosse
Spanish Guinea
Vil. Yosse
Vil. Yosse and on Bitam
Vil. Yosse
Vil. Mbomo and on Bitam
Vil. Mbomo
Vil. and Bitam
Vil. Mbomo
Yosse (105 inhabitants)
Mbomo (172 inhabitants)
Village Mékak
Group left to Minvoul
Mékak
Descendants vanished
Mékak
Vil. Mékak
Vil. Mékak
Vil. Mékak
Vil. Mékak
Vil. Mékak
Mékak (152 inhabitants)

611
614 This structure by interlocked lineages appears to be the primary characteristic of Fang society. One can therefore understand the importance attached in the past to the minute knowledge held by each individual of the elements of his paternal line. By means of the system of naming used by the Fang – a name of two units constructed by using as the second unit of the son's name the first unit of the father's name – the line of descent appears as a chain in which it is impossible to omit a single unit. Thus, Ntutum Ngéma of Sam village in Mitzic region (Esabökâ clan) can link the names of his male ancestors up to the fourteenth generation:

Generations	Known ancestors
X	Y
14	Éba Zi
13	Möbyèn Éba
12	Zɔ̀gɔ̀ Möbyèn
11	Ekwikwi Zɔ̀gɔ̀
10	Mâfɔ̀ Ekwikwi
9	Sé Mâfɔ̀
8	Étɔ̀gɔ̀ Sé — Nki Sé
7	Tsa Étɔ̀gɔ̀
6	Okwɔ̀ Tsa
5	Bitɔ̀gɔ̀ Okwɔ̀
4	Édu Bitɔ̀gɔ̀
3	Bɔ̀gɔ̀ Édu
2	Ngéma Bɔ̀gɔ̀
1	Ntutum Ngéma

Although this knowledge is limited, Ntutum Ngéma is able to place himself in the lineage issued from Ẹba Zi, who led the [111] migrations across the South Cameroons, and in that of Sé Mâfɔ̀, who led a fragment of the Esabökâ as far as present-day Gabon. He can also place himself in relation to intermediate lineages (Étɔ̀gɔ̀ Sé and Nki Sé) and to minor lineages (four sons of Bitɔ̀gɔ̀ Ɔ̀kwɔ̀), which are still represented in the region and within the village.

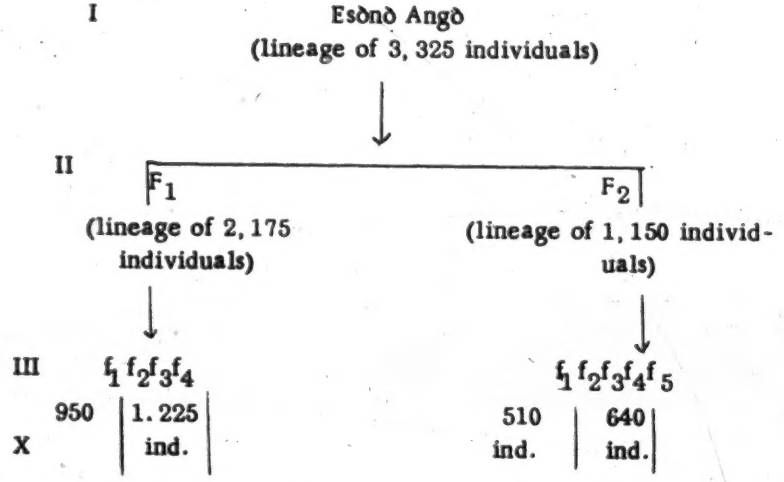
614 551 Incidentally, the method of naming peculiar to the Fang is evidence of a fundamental social segment, the group of brothers, real and half (siblings and half-siblings). Thus there are the sons of Bitɔ́gɔ̀ Ökwo who form the "heads" of four minor lineages still in existence:



The names themselves emphasize this double orientation, the vertical showing the real filiation and the horizontal showing the real brotherhood, which characterizes Fang social structure. Around such a horizontal segment the village (in this particular case Sam village) is constituted, and inside such a segment are produced the fissions giving birth to separate lineages. From the clan to the minor lineage the groupings must be defined in terms of these two dimensions, thus showing a structure that could be called both segmental and interlocked.

614 578 621 But this overlapping is not sufficient to bind the groupings together and to impose a hierarchy. Ruptures have been frequent and can be explained by the mechanism of Fang expansion, by economic factors, and by causes of a structural nature. By analyzing the lineages settled at the level of a fixed region, one notes that those whose origin goes back to an eldest son (ntɔ̀l-mɔ̀t are larger in number and are the basis of the local population. The Yèngwi studied above show this very specifically:

614 578 621 [112] Yèngwi in the Vicinity of Oyem



Each of the definitely located clan fragments reveals the existence of two groupings which are in a state of latent antagonism, which is shown, geographically, by the separate villages. The cleavage is such that at the time of the recent movement for regrouping villages, initiated entirely by the natives, each of the two antinomic elements refused to join together in order to create larger and more modernized village units. (1) Every time the

1. At the time of our investigation of a Kòjé grouping, for example, most of our informants asserted tirelessly that "the village will break apart if all the Kòjé mingle."

fission has been carried out between lineages issued from an "eldest" and the lineages issued from younger brothers. The five clan groupings studied in the Oyem region revealed this rupture – going back to the time of their settlement in the country – with irrefutable clarity (see Table V).

Table V

614
578
621

Clans	Groupings descended from the eldest	Groupings descended from younger son or sons	Villages corresponding to the first grouping	Villages corresponding to the second grouping
Yégnwi	Lineage of Mòndmògò Ésònd	Lineage of Nsim Esònd	Ebiane, etc...	Zorongone, etc...
Effak	Lineage of Ngu Mâmvé	Lineage of Môndu Mâmvé	Nto, etc..	Mékomo, etc...
Ozip	Lineage of Enduma Eswa	Lineage of Emvélé	Nkang	Mbenga, etc....
Yébimvé	Lineage of Ekòrò Mési	Lineage of Obiré Mési	Afémame, etc...	Angone, etc...
Kojé	Lineage of Mözògò Mômbé	Lineages of five younger sons	Nto, etc...	Mbomo, etc...

[113] This state of tension, bringing about more or less real fissions, is bound up with a social organization which gives economic and political pre-eminence to the "eldest," [sons] which favors the lineages issued from them, and which, above all, is not hierarchic for the purpose of maintaining the cohesion of groupings, except as needed for defense and expansion, and except for the prestige of temporary "chiefs." The desire for independence manifested by the heads of lineages as soon as their grouping has become fairly large is not controlled in an organized manner. Studies conducted during the first years of this century, especially those of Martrou and Trilles, all insist on the process of fragmentation of

614 lineages which is more marked as the Fang become unattached
578 conquerors. In the same way frequent examples have been given
621 of extensive agglomerations being broken up after the death of the "chief" who had founded and maintained them. The size and cohesion of the groupings appear therefore in a large measure to depend on the personality of the leaders who have asserted themselves (for any rightful succession may be contested under pretext of incapacity, or it may be refused) and on circumstances. This explains in part the frequency of fissions observed by various authors at the level of the third or fourth generation. (1) The size

1. Particularly, E. Trezenem, "Notes ethnographiques sur les tribus Fan du Moyen-Ogooué [Ethnographic Notes on the Fang Tribes of the Middle Ogooué]," op. cit.

of localized groupings may therefore vary a great deal – especially since the pacification of the country – going from the major lineage expressed in "clan patches" to the minor lineage (nd'è bòt) forming an isolated hamlet.

Kinship

612 Our analysis of Fang society has so far considered groupings only in terms of two fundamental elements: paternal filiation and real fraternity. We must now examine the bonds created and the relations prescribed by other modalities of kinship, as well as by the alliances that may exist between "foreign" groupings as a result of marriages.

612 601 Through the medium of his father (ésa, whom he calls taga) and of his mother (nya, whom he calls nanö), the individual belongs to two kinship groupings, the paternal (ésinyâg) and the maternal (dzânanö). For the young Fang these two have neither the same significance nor the same importance. [114] The course of his life will generally be spent in the midst of the first group, while he has only incidental relations with the "relatives." of the second group. It is from the first that he receives his clan affiliation. The fundamental relations of paternal kinship are governed,

601
608 Afénane (Oyem District) from July 12-19, 1948], Archives d'Oyem.

The relation between the mwanö-kal and the nya-nduma is about the same as that between son-in-law and father-in-law.

583 Such an assembly of facts is understandable only in terms of
608 the Fang principle regulating the circulation of bride prices. "The brother marries with his sister's bride price," nduma a luġ nö biki kal. Within such a circuit, the establishment of a couple concerns not only [117] the two partners but also the sister of the husband who has indirectly "provided" the bride price making the marriage possible, and the brother of the wife who has indirectly "recovered" this same bride price in order to get married. This explains the bonds existing between the maternal [sic] nephew and
[601] uncle and also the rights which the paternal aunt (sôna) has, according to Curault, "over her brother's children, since it is thanks to the price of her sale that her brother was able to get married and consequently have children." In exceptional circumstances
608 this relationship is sufficiently active to allow the nephew to
614 settle in the midst of the family grouping of the maternal uncle or of the husband of the paternal aunt. We have had occasion to observe the first case, which involved a change of clan affiliation. A man of Yèngwi birth left his grouping following a death of which he was suspected; having joined his maternal uncle with whom he settled down to live, where he was considered as an Esabâg (he was said to be ñna ayôg, entered into the clan).

601 The kinship terms in the Fang system are applied not only to a specific class of individuals but are often used in an extended manner. Ngwé may designate any maternal relative. Nya-nduma (literally, the mother's brother) is applied to certain maternal male relatives: maternal grandfather and his brothers, maternal uncles and their descendants (1), in fact, to all the men belonging

1. Cf. L. Mba, op. cit., pp. 32 and 41.

to the nd'è bot of the maternal grandfather. Mwanö-kal implies

621 participation in the same tasks, tends – if one may venture the
562 play on words – to the confusion of its members. On the other
571 hand, the women it controls do not form such a coherent whole;
they represent different clans, different modalities of kinship;
they are the center of virtual conflicts (between female "relatives"
and female "relations by marriage," between co-wives); except
for the wives of the same man, who live together, they do not
have a common living place.

621 The nd'ɛ̀ bɔ̀t – and, more precisely, this virile whole made
571 up of relatives belonging to the same guardhouse (abɛ̀ñɔ̃) – harbors,
578 however, latent antagonisms, which are the result of the privilege
614 linked with ancestry [133] or seniority. These tensions can come
to a head when disputes arise usually from economic causes, such
as circulation of wealth or of women, or allocation of farming land.
They help to explain the very variable size of the groupings con-
sidered as villages, and the phenomena of aggregation and disinte-
gration of the latter according to circumstances. But both of these
movements are effected as a function of the minor lineage which
is the nd'ɛ̀ bɔ̀t.

621 This grouping may by itself constitute a separate unit of about
571 ten persons or a village with up to a hundred inhabitants. When a
614 village is old, with a large population (200 to 300 persons or more),
it cannot remain organized around a single common hearth. It is
arranged around several centers corresponding to the sons of the
founder or their successors. Thus the village of Ebiane (Yéngwi
in the vicinity of Oyem) has 235 inhabitants distributed in three
groups representing the respective posterity of three brothers. We
have already stressed the fact that the heads of minor lineages are
at the level of the same segment. The village of Afénane (Yébimvé
of the Oyem region) with more than 300 inhabitants also consists
of the posterity of three brothers, and each of the nd'ɛ̀ bɔ̀t occupies
a definite position on the village street, according to the following
diagram:

621 The groupings are located according to the order of their
571 pre-eminence, that of the eldest being at the back in direct con-
614 tact with the chief's hut. Also, grouping 1 does not represent the whole of the lineage descended from the eldest brother (Ekòrò Ngòm); the latter divided at the level of the sons of Ekòrò Ngòm into three elements, of which one is at Afénane and the two others make up the very close villages of Messia (139 inhabitants) and M'Fagne (97 inhabitants).

621 This whole Yébimvé group, consisting in a limited area of
571 nearly 1,000 persons, is interesting to the extent that it shows
578 how the "major" lineages (which we have described above under
614 the name of abial è bòt) and the "minor" ones determine residence in a definite zone and a village. Two brothers led a migratory group [134] of Yébimvé from the Cameroons to the territory occupied today by their posterity. A conflict arising from the unequal distribution of the women acquired from foreign villages lead to the first rupture. Each of the two brothers moved away with the group he controlled, and the memory of past antagonisms has remained sufficiently alive to prevent any attempt today at recombining the members.

621 The initial cleavage can be presented in the following man-
571 ner: (Table VII on following page.)
614 The cleavage is expressed in relation to a common origin (A) which represents the head of the "major" lineage and gives rise to the first rupture which we mark with a double line. The two nd'è bòt have separated and settled in spite of all in adjacent regions. But these groupings have themselves been subject to new fragmentations since then. We represent the second of these where they occur [135] at the level of the third generations (after III, V, and VII), giving rise to the creation of villages very close to one another and able to co-operate and, above all, to regroup if required by circumstances.

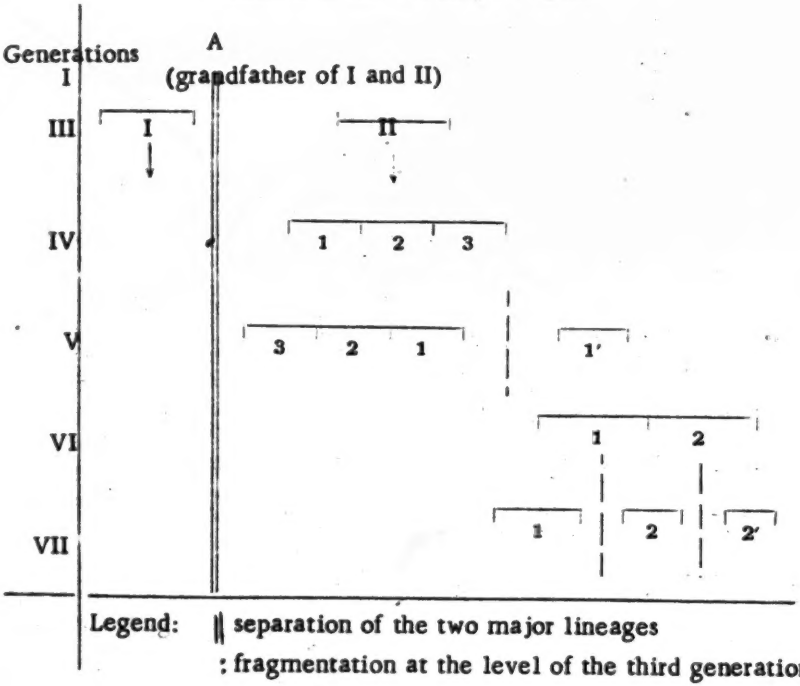
These observations show that the nd'è bòt is a true residential unit. They show how the cleavage becomes possible as soon as this unit reaches a certain size (a size, from the point of view of security and economic demands, making it viable as a separate unit); but the distance (in the sociological sense) between fragments varies

621
571
614

in terms of the circumstances which gave rise to the rupture and of the necessity to reserve eventual co-operation. The instability of the Fang village until recent times is certainly due to the nature of the old economy and to a poor capacity for disposition of land space, but also to a type of organization that does not permit (or permits badly) the control of large groupings. These have been made necessary only by lack of security.

Table VII

Yébimvé in the Vicinity of Oyem



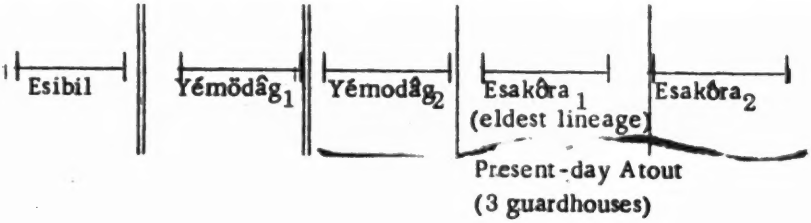
Legend: ‖ separation of the two major lineages
: fragmentation at the level of the third generations.

In the case of mixed villages where groupings belonging to different clans are found assembled together, usually following an administrative alteration of the population, instability appears to be more marked and distribution into definitely located nd'è bòt becomes a necessity. Such a grouping thus adds divisions which involves the co-existence of clan elements foreign to the

621 divisions already existing. This occurs even in the case of small
571 villages. We give the example of Atout in Mitzic region founded
614 by some Esibil to whom were added some Yémŏdâg and some Esakòra.

Table VIII

Village of Atout



Legend: ‖ definitive separation

| division into nd'è bòt making up Atout.

The founding group and a large part of the Yémödâg have already seceded; the Esakòra grouping has divided into two nd'è bòt (the "elder" and the younger), which represents a first [136] phase of the relaxing of bonds, for this division is not necessitated by the as yet reduced size of the group.

The mixed villages – called mfulana möyôg, mixture of clans – have necessitated the creation of an embroyonic form of chefferie [French administrative district]; the recognition of an authority based outside "kinship." Thus, when a fairly large grouping is concerned, the chief is careful to settle apart and to have at his disposal a guardhouse other than the one in which the members of his nd'è bòt assemble. But except for the attempts of the government to "construct" this chefferie, nothing justifies such an organization to maintain the cohesion of the village grouping it controls. The political problem – Fang society has been classed among the "anarchies" or "stateless societies" – in fact conditions

621 all future progress to the extent to which it allows (or does not allow)
571 the maintenance of sufficiently large and stable village units.
614

Political Authority and Judicial Authority

554 Taking Fang society as an example, Dr. Cureau speaks of
622 "a phenomenon of a stretching ... of the social bloc into a hierarchy based either on filiation or on intellectual and particularly moral superiority, both of which principles have their practical value according to the times." (1) He insists on a fact we have

1. Work already quoted, p. 332.

pointed out, the lack of a hierarchical organization, [with only]
[196] the simple existence of pre-eminences. The language itself gives proof of this fact by not having a special word to designate the chief, using ésa when the pre-eminence is in a way genealogical, nkuma when it is based on wealth, ẓoé (from ẓu, to say) when it justified by eloquence and the ability to command. By magnifying this statement, A. Cureau contrasts the Fang groupings with those of other peoples as being "anarchical tribes" as opposed to "organized tribes." He writes: "Authority is occasional and momentary ... Edvoughe has carried the votes in such-and-such a difficult palaver, the whole assembly obeys for a moment this ephemeral chief; tomorrow Nzokh will have succeeded Edvoughe in the leadership of opinion; here then the struggle against one and all takes place between constantly changing and constantly renewed contestants." (2)

2. Ibid., p. 326.

In a similar sense the informants of the Commission for [137] Historical Investigation assert that the chief was "in a word the one from whom the community expected the greatest services." (1)

1. Official report of the fifth session.

In the same vein there are continual complaints from administrators incapable of reviving the powerful traditional chefferies and of acting through their medium.

than tribal ties. Nevertheless, politico-religious associations like the ngil did exist—very little is known about them today—which transcended clan barriers and contributed to a certain amount of tribal cohesion. On the other hand, certain individuals could have influence, sometimes authority, but never permanent command, extending beyond the limits of their clan. Usually the people involved were officers in initiation societies: the nsig nto, the Bané high judge, was probably a high-ranking initiate in the ngil. The njôô bôt (commander of men, war leader), the évet ("capita," caravan leader), the nkukuma (1) (rico hombre, rich man)—these men on the other

1. Emphatic form of nkukum (rich).

hand had only occasional authority and that within a limited circle.

b. The Clan

I call "clan" that which the majority of the Pahouin call ayoñ (mvôg, mvôk, in certain northern tribes) (2). It is perhaps the basic

2. Cournarie, 1933, in Coutumes de Nyong et Sanaga /Customs of the Nyong and Sanaga/ points out that ayong were divided into meyom (ayom). The ayom is formed by the coming together of several mvogo who, being descended from the same ancestor, consider themselves the issue of the same mother (obligation of exogamy). Occasionally deference is paid to the mvogo most closely related to the ancestor, and its head is called ntomba or nya moto nnam or mot nnam.

The collective group may gather together: Emoi of nda bot, Ekoan of mvogo. All grown men may speak. Elders and distinguished persons then withdraw for deliberation (esok); they return to announce the decision. (J. B.)

structural unit of Pahouin society, at any rate the one the Fang of

● G14 Gabon have given priority to recreating, the regrouping of villages being supposed, in their view, to take place as a function of the regrouping of the meyoñ.

[848 579] The ayoñ includes all the patrilineal descendants of a common ancestor, the illegitimate children of girls belonging to the ayoñ, and adopted ones. The ayoñ has a name, a tattoo mark (ndan), often certain prohibitions (bityi, biki), and perhaps a totem. The most strict exogamy is the rule. All members call themselves brothers (bobenyañ).

Although there was, properly speaking, no real political division corresponding to the ayoñ, nor any organized chiefship—explicable particularly in view of the very scattered settlement pattern of the members—clan sentiment was, and still is, very strong. Periodical meetings, bisulan, bring ayoñ members together, presided over by the eldest (ntôl) of the senior lineage (mvôk, ayôm) (3). The custom

> 3. Ayôm probably has the same root as nnôm, pl. beyôm = male; it should be remarked that the ayôm is often designated by the name of a female ancestor.

of these bisulan has recently been revived /46/; first in the Cameroons, [182] where the native authority was reorganized in 1945-48 along clan lines, then in Gabon, where the meyoñ are in an advanced state of disintegration, above all in the south.

[36] An ayoñ, whose villages separated one from the other by villages of other clans sometimes extend over several hundred kilometers, is divided into segments (mvôk) that include the descendants of the brothers, or rather the sons, of the clan ancestor, then /is divided/ into lineages (bisa, meyôm) derived from the descendants of the sons of the ancestor of the segment. The longer the genealogy (mvam, nlañ bimvam; meba'a), the more vague these categorical differences become: in one place mvôk is used for what is called ésa nearby and ayôm further away. But, except in southern Gabon, the genealogies are still well preserved, and the majority of adults can trace their relationship, if not to the clan ancestor himself, at least to his [849] lineage. The teaching of these genealogies, which was the core of the traditional training of boys, is dying out with the spread of schooling, but children still know at least the genealogy of their village-family (jal, dzal; nda bôt).

614 619 Trilles listed about 80 meyoñ among the Fang of Gabon, and comparable figures may be set for the Boulou or the Ewôndo, which would tend to cross-check the theory according to which clan ties extend across tribal boundaries to include the whole Pahouin group. The phenomenon does not seem open to question as regards those clans that are to be found under the same name throughout all, or in many, tribes; it is perhaps more questionable for certain Gabon segments that have been more or less arbitrarily absorbed into Cameroons clans at the time of "Pahouin regrouping." Even in the latter case, however, there exists for the pseudo tradition a precedent genuinely rooted in custom, that of tribes like the Yebekolo or the Yembama, whose names suggest that we are dealing with former clans, which became detached from a tribe (the Boulou, in actual fact) and took to practicing endogamy. An analgous process of "clanification" may be imagined of Fang segments too long isolated from their ayoñ.

Be that as it may, this intertribal community of meyoñ is more apparent between the Boulou and Fang tribes, that is, in the south, than between them and the Beti tribes of the north, certain of which, moreover, call the clan mvôg, not ayoñ, a phenomenon perfectly explicable if we admit that the Eton and Mangisa, for instance, are Pahouinized rather than true Pahouin.

614 Each ayoñ has a proper name, which, according to Trilles, would be that of the clan totem preceded by the prefix ésa or ye (segments and lineages are called by the name of the ancestor). Some meyoñ, however, have a name that does not include these particles, but they are generally those groups that possess a particular kind of structure 614 192 to which we shall refer later on (1). The particle ésa derives from the

1. The ébi clans in Gabon are related in the opinion of some writers to the ésa clans; but there is a noun ébi, ébé, meaning hole, ditch.

verb sak /47/, a transitive verb meaning "to perform coition" (sa' minga = to copulate with a woman), by extension meaning "to impregnate;" the regular derivative, ésa/bisa, means "lineage," while the irregular form, ésa/beséa, means "father." The particle ye might come from yee, "valley," "hollow," "fissure," perhaps connected with a root Y./YI connoting ideas of moisture, feminity, or maternity

614 [192] (yii = to weep; yek = to make a fish dam of wet earth; nyia = mother; nyin = four; enyin = life). Sometimes the differences in name have been explained by geographical origin: the ésa clans would be those in the west, the ye clans those in the east. Actually, we find ye clans and ésa clans in all tribes, in the east as well as the west. Yet the geographical explanation should perhaps not be altogether rejected but rather associated with a sexual interpretation.

823 591 614 The Pahouin do, in fact, seem to have ascribed their system of directions to the apparent movement of the sun or, perhaps, to the line of their migration. The west would then be associated with the right, mbo nnôm = male side, the east to the left, mbo ngal = female side (1). This polarity would indicate a series of little-known insti-

1. According to Largeau, north is on the right (male), south on the left (female), which is understandable if directions are based on an E-W line of march. See below.

In Zoll'Owambe's description of the bilaba (no. 125) imported merchandise (male?) comes from the north, local merchandise (female) from the south, while he uses to designate the south the term nsak, meaning "interior," "upstream," or "east," a meaning comparable with that of nké, west or downstream.

tutions, first of all, the joking relationship, awusô, derived in turn from the great national sô rite. In fact, I think I observed that the awusô relationship existed almost always between an ésa clan and a ye clan: Esakoé-Yekomba, Esaébeñ-Yenjôk, Esel-Yembôñ, etc. Certain points may also suggest a link with the former marriage custom and a kind of potlatch called bilaba (2).

2. Another explanation makes the ésa clans originally segments of the ye clans; this interpretation could also account for the joking relationship.

614 The problem is not made easier by the knowledge that certain ésa clans identify themselves with ye clans in other tribes and that there

614 are, besides, meyoñ that are outside the system.

614 563 184 Among the latter I shall mention the Ndôñ and the Bekôć or Bekwi, to be found under these names in all, or nearly all, the Pahouin tribes. The ethnic substantive Bekôć is simply the plural of a common noun, nkôć, "dwarf." These people are, it seems, descendants of aborigines, undoubtedly Pygmies, "adopted" by the tribes at the time of invasion. Although looked upon as an ayoñ and calling one another brother, they do not practice exogamy and seem to attach their genealogies to those of other clans, to which nevertheless they do not belong.

614 184 The case of the Ndôñ is quite different. They crossed the Sanaga with the other Pahouin, and they are certainly "active" Pahouin. But they observe endogamy among their three mvôk (Ndôñ Mvu, Ndôñ Bibak, and Ndôñ Bikoć), which no other Pahouin ayoñ does, at least to my knowledge. Besides, I believe I noticed /48/ among those of the southern Cameroons and northern Gabon morphological traits setting them sharply apart from those of neighboring clans—reddish color of the skin, frequency of green or greenish-blue eyes—which might be explained by the inbreeding consequent upon endogamy, but also perhaps by a different ethnic origin. Another piece of evidence, as insufficiently attested as the foregoing, is that among the Ndôñ I met the last of the smiths and the most feared magicians among the Boulou and Fang tribes of the Cameroons.

142 144

326 791

The Ngoć ayoñ also is found under this name in nearly all the Pahouin tribes and, according to Bertaut, among the neighboring Bakoko. The Esel, who are similarly spread throughout the tribes, have non-Pahouin homonyms: /for instance/ the Bantu Esel tribe of the southeastern Cameroons (Moloundou). The name could, however, be a contraction of ésa (ésa-el?). Ngoć and Esel are usually exogamic.

c. The Extended Family or Village Family

596 621 The term "village family" is no doubt more accurate than the classic "extended family," both because the nda bôt (house of the people) is the only social group that corresponds exactly to a geographical form of settlement (the jal or hamlet), and because without the geographical criterion it is difficult to distinguish this /kind of/ family from the intermediate structures between it and the clan, such as segments or lineages (mvôk, bisa). And finally, it is on this

The first wife, married by mfañ aluk, a proper wedding, and called ôsua minga or ékômba, theoretically has a privileged position vis-à-vis the mimbom or co-wives. It falls to her to aid or replace the mother-in-law, ntyi, in her role of disciplinarian over the women of the nda. It is or was she who took over the training of the young immature brides waiting to reach puberty in her hut; co-wives of inferior rank therefore often looked upon her as their ntyi. This relationship of daughter-in-law and mother-in-law also exists between two mimbom when the nsuba of the second was paid with the nsuba received for the marriage of a daughter of the first, or when she was the object of a marriage by exchange for this daughter.

Against these legal prerogatives, we find the actual prerogatives of the favorite, nkpwek or ntômba (ntômba = ewe), who besides may be the ôsua minga, although this is rather rare. Custom recognizes the actual privileges of the nkpwek by limiting them so as to prevent them from becoming privatives of the rights of the other wives. I think, although I cannot state it for certain, that there exists, besides, a nuance between the terms nkpwek and ntômba, the first referring, as the word indicates, to an actual preference on the part of the husband, the second to a legal position which the most prolific of the wives would have, or perhaps the one of the best origin.

Let us remember that marriage does not remove a woman from her own clan to attach her to her husband's: she is connected with this clan only through her children, if she has any. These children and their bobenyañ will become bobekal to their matrilineal cousins. If the marriage breaks up without the woman having borne a child, a kinship relation between the two clans is not established.

Such a dissolution of a marriage may come about, first, upon the death of the woman when no éjian takes place, the substitution of a sister, which is rare today. The kinship tie between the clans is in force if children are born of the marriage; it remained in force in former times in the absence of children if the nsuba was not repaid. The husband's death ends the personal marriage tie but not the collective bond by virtue of which widows are assigned to the heir, as described above. /55/

One of the most frequent causes /sic/ of the dissolution of a marriage nowadays is divorce. This may be the husband's action: a suu minga jañ, he sends his wife back to her village. The grounds usually given are habitual misbehavior, sorcery, "bad character, "

made, but this practice is only very rarely followed in cases of free union, ébon, even when that is followed by a regular marriage of the natural parents. Illegitimate children, fruits of an ébon, bobengon, are kept in their mother's clan, where, moreover, they rank socially only after legitimate children.

There used to exist a kind of adoption, rare today, of a political rather than family nature, which could almost be defined as naturalization. It could only be carried out by the head of an extended family on behalf of an orphan, mone nyui, of another clan (orphans within /56/ the clan being, of course, already considered children of the head of the family). The adopted child, abiaé môsô (i.e., "conceived in the daytime," sexual relations being lawful only between sundown and sunrise), came into the clan with a status analogous to that of the monengon. He remained subject to the marriage prohibitions of his clan of origin.

A non-Pahouin outsider permanently residing in a village, a ntabe, may benefit through marriage by alliance, élat, which does not thereby make him a member of the clan. He becomes a monekal (sister's son, uterine relative) and his children, though legitimate, belong to their mother's clan.

The descent relationship may be broken by paternal or maternal curse, meyo'é: the parent uttering the curse shows the child his sexual organs, "the place whence he came," while pronouncing a formula oath. The curse is supposed to bring misfortune and death to the offspring accursed, whom everyone avoids. It can only be lifted by a collective purificatory rite (étye, tyô) in which the whole nda bôt participates.

3. Age Grades

The individual's life cycle is marked by a certain number of transitions, which are accompanied, or were usually accompanied, by rites that will be discussed further on (p. 115). These crises are birth, weaning, puberty, attaining majority, marriage, death. Age grades correspond to the intermediate stages; they are less strictly defined today than formerly.

I do not know the exact word for fetus: people say abum, belly. There must be a more precise term, but I think there is a prohibiton connected with it, certainly as regards men, although it may now be

influence is stronger, but there too one finds associations influenced by foreign types of ecclesiastical organization.

Since 1946 the Boulou clans have formed associations, sometimes proclaimed in conformity with the law of 1901, and since 1950 gathered into the N'Tem-Kribi Tribal Union, which covers primarily Boulou, Fong, Fang, Ntoumou, and Mvaé. Each clan has a central board elected during an annual or biennial ésulan, and local boards. Membership is not automatic: members have to apply for admission, pay subscription and entrance fees. At the core of each clan association there are "societies" of young people of both sexes, of married women, of nonvoters /abstinents/, etc. The young people's "societies" are certainly the most unusual. They were formed with official approbation at the time of the abolition of forced labor recruitment. The "societies" used to bargain with local authorities over projects like road maintenance or the construction of works of art /sic/, the money received being turned into a common account and used, either to help the members meet bride-price payments or other expenses, or—particularly—to arrange festivals and banquets.

In large towns Pahouin migrants join de jure and de facto associations, generally within a tribal, not a clan, framework. These associations have protective and mutual-aid purposes /69/ and are sometimes quite powerful. To these should be related the tontines or subscription societies consisting of small numbers of laborers, servants, or minor employees, who pay into a common fund the larger part of their monthly wage, each member in turn being able to draw upon the sizable sum thus collected each month. The last two institutions are in no way specifically Pahouin, nor characteristic of the Cameroons or Gabon.

6. Law and Property

a. Source

Pahouin law has always been complex. Formerly, it dealt primarily with the status and condition of persons /statut et de l'état des personnes/ upon which the property system was dependent. Under the influence of the economic changes brought about by colonization, the law with regard to property has become definitely independent of the law of persons, the latter being inclined to grow simpler with the dissociation of the old social and family organizations.

769 The figure was placed on the new group's first family altar, and so afterwards were the skulls of the founder and of the benya bôtô of succeeding generations. A full biéri basket was the sign of a group's
554 antiquity, which doubtless implied prestige more than genuine authority, yet nevertheless represented the nearest approach to political authority that existed in the Fang group, particularly if one takes into account the fact that officials of interclan associations were chosen from among the owners of many skulls, whence prestige extended to a large number of mvôk or meyom. The prestige of the living was exerted through the authority of the dead.

836 Skulls were, indeed, the seat or receptacle of the individual's capacity for action (we must remember that bo = to make, boo = brain), and the use of skulls in the practice of magic was not confined to ancestral skulls only: the skulls of enemies killed in battle or sacrificed in anthropophagous ceremonies before or afterward were preserved, and so were those stolen from neighbors. In the same way the skulls of the kinds of animals desired were used for hunting rites. However, it seems that a distinction was made between family skulls and outsiders' skulls, only the first having a place in the éwolé biéti and
782 appearing in family rites. The power of the skulls was increased by sprinkling them with sacrificial blood.

769 When a youth reached nya môtô age he had to learn to recognize
869 his ancestors so as to be able to ask for their help when the occasion
881 arose. Their skulls were shown to him until he could identify them individually and put them in the correct genealogical order. When
276 he was able to do this, he was given a brew of the narcotic herb alan, then spent a night in the biéti hut, facing the skulls, which had been removed from the éwolé and placed on the altar on which strongly scented plants were burned. During the night the ancestors appeared and gave him a cognomen and imposed one or more new taboos (at the same time he was relieved of certain prohibitions connected with age). Apparently it was during this initiation that his individual totem was revealed (if it was indeed a totem).

769 This question of the totem is very poorly elucidated, in spite of
614 some 600 pages devoted to the subject by Father Trilles. He dis-
114 tinguishes between clan, segment, individual, family, and society totems, etc. He also distinguishes a tutelary being, mvame, from the "effect of a tutelary being"; akam, an animal totem, from a dedicated animal or an incarnation of a man in an animal, etc. He

769 also discriminates between the ésayoñ, ancestor cult /112/, and the
•64 mvamayoñ, totemic cult. It must be admitted that there is now no
114 chance of obtaining a cross-checking of his theories except on points of detail, although that is no formal condemnation of his theories; it is the consequence of a shortage of researchers, lack of respect on the part of the researchers, or loss of traditions of initiation. The following points may be considered as established:

mvam (émvam) connotes ideas of a forefather, dead or alive, lineal and protective.

[784] akam, protection, is sometimes used in speaking of animals, to indicate the reason for a prohibition; the verb kam having a defending-protecting meaning as well as that of forbidding-prohibiting. All prohibitions are not tied up with these notions, but some are and they may well be individual prohibitions as well as hereditary collective ones, not necessarily involving animals.

Clan markings, mindem, and tattoo marks, mindan, are often connected with a prohibition.

825 There is a whole system of animal symbolism, evident particularly
[787] in tales and augury ("zoomancy," divination by spiders).

Certain animals are connected with initiation cults: very definitely the sô and snakes (dendraspis and python); probably the porcupine and tortoise (with feminine rites); perhaps the gorilla (njil; ngil, Johnson's tone 4, the ngil rite having tone 5).

[55] There does not appear to be any connection between an animal name borne by a person (Mvôm̂ô = Python, Zo'o = Elephant, Ze = Panther, etc.) and the prohibitions he is subject to.

614 Moreover, the following, it seems pretty certain, are not specifi-
825 cally related to totemism:

Alliance, élat or ngbwa, between a person and a particular animal.

A sorcerer's employing an animal, nkuk (observe that nkuk also means "mask") to carry out his sorcery at a distance.

[775] The incarnation of a sorcerer in the body of an animal, élañela (Trilles applies this name to the nkuk).

The temporary incarnation of a dead man in an animal's body.

The first three phenomena often seem to be confused in the minds of present-day Pahouin, and the fourth may be the consequence of this.

773 It is curious that the legend recounted by Trilles about the crocodile, which he considers to be the "national totem," represents

784 Some bityi appear to be connected with totemism: these are the bityi mekam, protective prohibitions, forbidding members of certain clans to kill certain animals or to eat certain plants. Others are undoubtedly connected with the social structure, like sex or age-grade prohibitions, the breaking of which strike at the family hierarchy. Others may be described as hygienic prohibitions, like those connected with pregnancy, illness, or convalescence. There are prohibitions connected with magic: personal taboos vis-à-vis some animal seen in a dream after a family initiation, or imposed when joining an association; prohibitions pronounced by a magician, often out of revenge; prohibitions undertaken as vows to obtain a specific result. Among the Beti, Binet has known women to impose on themselves certain [483] food etyi for a year, at the end of which time there is a party where [177] they collect many presents from their relatives and friends. This seems to be an innovation and perhaps represents a deviation from certain Catholic practices.

614 It seems that in former times, following a war or an alliance, or in connection with an awusô relationship, two clans might undertake to respect one another's clan taboo. Besides, married women, although they did not enter the husband's clan, were supposed to some extent to respect its bityi.

783 Minsem can be expiated by redemption, ngôô, according to
784 different rites (étyi, melan among men, évoô among women), including public confession and sacrifice (for women, the sacrifice is made by father or husband, the woman undergoing severe corporal punishment). /123/

Some personal bityi can be raised (kui étyi = to emerge from a taboo) by a process similar to that of redemption for a nsem. This is never possible in cases of general sexual, age-grade, or clan prohibitions.

747 The first Christian converts must have shown genuine heroism in
764 giving up their bityi, since they had to overcome, not only personal fear, sometimes at the cost of real psycho-physiological crises, but also unanimous public obloquy and often the vengeance of their family, which attributed to their minsem all its misfortunes. One might say that only that first generation of Christians succeeded in abandoning the bityi almost completely. The following generations, in much greater numbers, continued to observe quite a few /bityi/, certainly all those that did not openly conflict with the practice of the /new/

territory, though each keeps its own autonomy without intermingling.

Each of the four Fan groups are divided into tribes, each with its own chief, territory, and autonomy; none is subordinate to another, all the more so because slaves are not taken in war, for unredeemed captives are promptly eaten.

The tribes vary in importance according to the level of development, the kind of chiefs they have had, and the size of their territory. Thus, the Yenkwax possess no more than three sparsely populated villages, and at the most they can muster 300 warriors; the Yengon, [14] though a long-established tribe, have only one village and a few warriors; while the Yemvi, on the contrary, inhabit several hundred villages and number thousands of warriors. But about this term "tribe," let me here mention a very important point: at present, and since a migration which, according to my own research, should be dated 32 or 33 generations back, no more tribes are being formed, only clans. Existing tribes (and we shall see in a moment how they may be distinguished from clans) may be said to have been established about ten centuries ago in our reckoning, which clearly does not mean that they did not exist before that time. Their origin must certainly go back much earlier.

A tribe rarely remains homogeneous for long. Many factors contribute to its splitting up, such as a series of migrations, family disputes, and the activities of heads of families who are ambitious or eager to throw off excessive authority. The steady growth of a tribe at the same time leads to the overpopulation of villages and the necessity of looking elsewhere for new hunting and agricultural lands; hence, after an indefinite period, a tribe splits into clans composed of an unspecified and highly variable number of families. Some clans are very large, such as the Esingi, and make up hundreds of villages, while others, either because they are very recent or because of the same disintegrating forces as exist for the tribes, number only a few families.

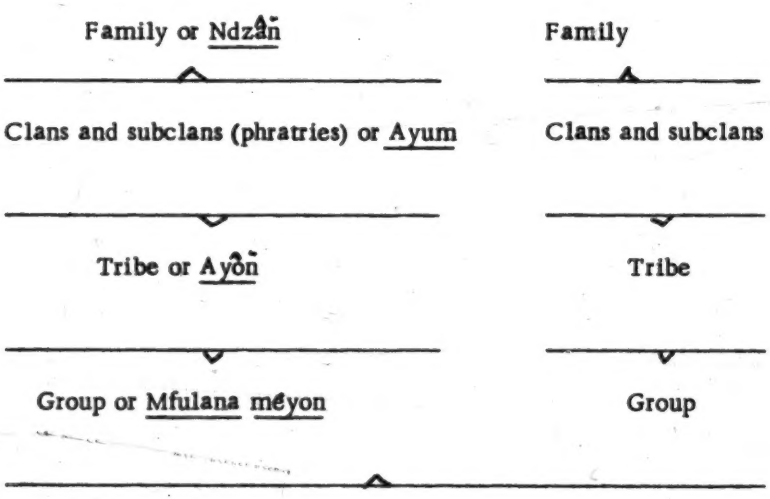
Clans in turn, as a result of the same circumstances that made tribes split into clans, split into subclans, also of varying importance.

From what I have just said, a fact may be immediately deduced which runs counter to the usual generalizations accepted by Europeans and superficial observers. In the view of the latter the

619 distribution of the nation and its division into tribes and clans is
614 based upon an arbitrary and highly variable standard; the number of individuals.

In my view on the contrary -- and this is certainly that of the Fan -- the different concepts of nation, tribe, clan, and subclan have a unique, immutable basis, the family, [15] which constitutes the kernel or, of one prefers, the primary cell or even the pivot on which the whole organization turns.

Thus we have the following structural table:



This structure has an important consequence, one whose development will not, however, be dealt with here but must be postponed until after discussion of the idea of the totem. The consequence is this: among clans some bear the totem name, others do not. Although some, in fact nearly all, writers consider that bearing the totem name is a condition sine qua non of totemism in clans, we shall see that this idea is exaggerated and that clans, with or without a totem name, are all totemic.

161 travelers. Thus in 1901-02 we were the first to explore the whole of the north Congo, which Crampel had only crossed before, and then the Dzèm and Dzandzama country; after us the boundary commission for the Cameroons came into a small part of the same country, and that was all. Thus a recent publication [19] gives the number of Fan warriors at about 40,000, a figure that is not even worth discussing. (1) What is certain is that the

[614]

1. One clan, the Amvom, exceeds this figure. The Bulé are larger; there are more than 400 Fan clans, at least that we know of. In terms of the official estimate each clan would have only about 100 armed men. In many cases this would barely be the number of villages.

total population of the French Congo, of which the Fan possibly compose half, may be estimated at a figure varying from three to ten million, and it is impossible to be more accurate at the present time. In my view we should estimate the Fan at five million at least, ten to twelve at the most. The Woleu basin alone, where we have determined the location of all the villages, includes more than a million Fan.

144 The Fan belong to the great Bantu family, but they represent an outer link or, rather, they are situated at the boundary separating the Bantu from the populations and languages of the northeast, those of Libya, Sudan, etc. They are, as Reclus says, the least Bantu of all the Bantu.

[pp.20-397 not translated. -Analyst]

Chapter XII

The Ministers of the Mvamayôn

[Summary omitted. --Translator]

779 The mvamayôn, or totem, has "rights" by the very fact of its existence.

779 [Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [402]
791 Sometimes in very important tribes, especially in those that make up large, compact groups, this role of minister to the mvamayôn has developed temporarily upon the practitioner.

Sometimes practitioners take on the role themselves and hold it by their personal importance or ability.

In both cases a kind of usurpation is always involved or a mixing up of powers, rarely a substitution. The practitioner then acts not in his own name by virtue of his role and his own authority, but as a delegated power. . . .

[One paragraph omitted. --Translator] [403]

[Two paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

779 Thus in certain specific cases the political chief of the clan
791 leaves the exercise of religious worship to the practitioner even
●614 with regard to the totem. Yet this is only a delegated role to the
769 extent that when the totem has to be questioned in a critical situation, the practitioner disappears and the chief resumes his rights: it would then be up to him to carry out ritual acts and make sacrifices. A chief may not be able to do this, [404] for instance, if he were very ill. A sacrifice is then offered to the totem directly concerned. Does the practitioner now come to the fore? Not at all. He first sacrifices to the tutelary spirits and spirits of the dead, and then he interrogates the spirits in order to find out what evil influences have caused the illness and to discover the person who, in the sacred phrase, has "made a fetish" against the sick man. The consanguineous heir appears in his turn to invoke the family's guardian spirits in favor of the sick man and to invoke his totem. In this case, invocations and sacrifice have a dual purpose: first, to invoke the direct ancestors represented by their skulls preserved in the biéri box -- this is the cult of the esayôn; secondly, to invoke the totem represented by a real or symbolic fragment -- this is the cult of the mvamayôn.

[Four paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [405]

791 There are two distinct characters: practitioner [feticheur]
757 and sorcerer.

The practitioner takes several forms: he may be soothsayer, physician, priest -- all different manifestations of the same ministry and all legal. In a word, the practitioner is the agent of the acknowledged cult.

575 754 825 can lead to much confusion. Sorcerers are people particularly eager to conceal themselves and at the same time to assert their power, and they are often clever at doing so. They succeed in disguising the real nature of their nagual: "It's my totem," they will say, if someone surprises them with their élâńéla. To be able to make their supposed totems appear at will often gives them special authority, which they can make good use of in certain circumstances. Indeed, one can imagine the prestige gained by a sorcerer who during a ritual ceremony thus calls on his totem, in reality his nagual. But ordinarily he restrains himself, for he would then unmask his sorcerer's character, and, unless he is all-powerful and protected from revenge, that is not at all what he has in mind. ...

●[614] According to certain chiefs, especially among the Békwé, the totem of the founder of the race or clan was originally his élâńéla. This is perfectly admissible. If by one or another means the founder of tribe or clan was able to bind an animal to his will, to make it obedient, or at least to persuade his followers that this was so -- which amounts to the same thing -- these men may very readily, after his death, choose his élańéla for their totem. But this choice, which is determined by circumstances or the wish of the dying chief, does not imply that it remains an élâńéla. On the contrary, this characteristic [492] disappeared by the very fact of its becoming a totem and ceasing to be a unit in order to become a collective group through its descendants.

[Two paragraphs omitted--Translator]

In a certain number of cases it has happened that the nagual is confused with the sorcerer himself. In fact, according to the Africans, sorcerers often transform themselves into animals. ...

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator] [493]

[Three paragraphs omitted. --Translator]

Almost always, I am convinced, these [phenomena] may be attributed to men being disguised as animals, either to safely satisfy their murderous impulses or to obtain victims for feasts of human flesh.

In some cases these men act under the mysterious influence of unknown agents. This perhaps involves a kind of unconscious

171 We find further confirmation of the foregoing in the
174 following lines: "In archaic times, before the unification of Egypt into a single kingdom, it was no doubt the tribal chiefs who, as Pharaoh did later for the entire country, declared war, dispensed justice, and offered the sacrifices." (1)

1. The Life-Work of Sir Peter Le Page Renouf (Paris, 1902-07), Vol. 2, p. 351, "The Priestly Character of the Earliest Egyptian Civilization."

As religious leader the]Fan] tribal chief can thus delegate his authority only to the practitioner; as totemic chief, only to his direct consanguineal heir.

• 614 This is true to such a degree that if, for instance, the family should die out, the tribe would not come to an end or be destroyed, for the elders of the clan or of the mother tribe would trace genealogies back to the beginning or source of the race and find a secondary family related more closely to the founder of the race; that secondary family would in turn become the main lineage. This transfer comes about quite naturally, without hitch or conflict, merely by force of circumstances. In some cases, especially with a small clan, families will attach themselves to other clans; again, according to the formative law given earlier, new clans will be created, filials of the mother branch. If a mother clan is involved, then, on the contrary, families will attach themselves more willingly to the filial branch (branch in esa), where they will find the family totem (esamvèn, esamvùn, etc.).

d) Mistakes made by European administration in appointing new tribal chiefs from outside the main lineage

648 Clearly the chief mistake, and hence the lack of success,
623 of civil administrators or military leaders who for one reason or another depose the legitimate chief of a tribe and appoint another is clear from the totemic laws just enumerated and the very structure of the race. I willingly admit that sometimes such depositions and appointments may, and often should, be made,

Code to indigenous tribes, as has been decreed in Gabon, is one of those governmental aberrations that reveals as profound an ignorance as possible of the people to be governed and the principles of government. [547]

For the same reasons, one can understand how impossible it is to elect a chief outside the established rules of succession. A chief appointed from outside the main lineage has not, and cannot have, authority.

e) Change of clan totem

When, for the above reasons, authority have passed to another clan family, the public cult remains the same. But it must be emphasized as of the greatest importance that the ancestral totem disappears, since it has no longer an eponymous representative of its own blood. It will be replaced by the family totem of the new chief, which then becomes the totem for the whole tribe or clan. Far from being hypothetical, this is, on the contrary, a repeated occurrence, of which the following is a typical illustration.

A certain Mba-Alame, of the Yebiken or Banana clan, left the tribe after a dispute with his clan chief and went to establish a village on a hill facing his old village. While remaining on fairly good terms with the people of his former clan, his first concern was to create a new family of his own and to cut himself off distinctly from his former companions. He therefore changed his name and took another, which happened to be Nzoge Nze, Elephant-son-of the Panther. The panther became his new totem and from then on, that of his sons and of the future clan. He was in the full sense of the term, the new father of the tribe, able to say more justifiably than Marshal Lefebevre once did: "We are the forefathers!"

In order to undertake this sort of action, a man must have a very resolute character, capable of breaking with his kin, friends, and clan without fearing the always fatal reprisals.

Moreover, such a happening is only possible if the tribe is small enough, because in a large tribe the chief would be very

unlikely to allow such a flouting of his authority. It is also feasible if the chief is old and feeble, and the rebel held in awe for his physical strength and especially his notorious bad temper, based on substantial proof. Also the "deserter" or "uprooted" man must not belong to any secret "clan" society, because the initiates never pardon [548] desertion, this is a primary and always inviolable law.

And that is not all. It is imperative for the new founder to find a willing totem. The choice cannot be at random, as some people may imagine, and there must be a series of sacrifices during which the chosen animal indicates its acceptance. In such a case, the personal totem will receive this honor, for it cannot be changed and not to select it would be a gross insult that would unfailingly lead to significant revenge. But the personal totem must agree to become the tribal totem. In so doing, the spirit -- much more intelligent than man -- knows that it is agreeing to become his actual and titular guardian and it is not always anxious to do so. In similar circumstances, Nzoge Nze admitted to me one day that before finally acquiring an accepting totem he had had to wait for several months and to sacrifice a good many fowls and even kids. The practitioner also had to be satisfied.

It should be observed that following this acceptance all panthers did not become Nzoge Nze's totems, but only those who inhabited the country and were the offspring or descendants of his nze or particular totem panther. This proves the truth of our system. Furthermore, these panthers were sacred only to Nzoge Nze, for each particular totem is particular only to its owner, not to his next of kin. Thus, one of Nze's sons had the anteater, avil, for a totem: he was therefore not supposed to eat it, although his brothers and sons did so with impunity. But once Nzoge Nze's totem, nze, becomes the family and, therefore the tribal totem, his children will avoid killing any panther, on the chance that one might be related to that nze. However, should they happen to kill and eat one, the offense would be only hypothetical and before expiating it, they would make the

779 necessary investigation by sacrifices. And the totem, under
622 penalty of not receiving any expiation, should reveal its rela-
614 tionship. But as Nzoge Nze becomes more of a remote ancestor, the risk of relationship with every panther grows, for each panther may be related to the eponymous ancestor and consequently the law becomes more stringent. Should a panther enter villages and kill a few innocent people, [549] such as women and children, the men of the eponymous clan would be permitted to kill it, and only in such a case, but they would still be forbidden to eat it. When after a series of sacrifices for this purpose, it has been duly established that revenge for some unexpiated totemic offense is not involved, that is proof that the panther in question does not belong to the eponymous panther clan. It is a "foreigner" or "deserter", the latter being quite common in certain animal species, one of whose members may leave the group to go off on his own and become a "solitary," as do elephants, panthers, wild boars, gorillas. It is then perfectly lawful to attack it and kill it if possible. A trifling ritual expiation will suffice, proportionate to the very small likelihood of having killed an ally, an extremely slight probability, since actions are never taken without previous assent of the totem chief of the tribe. The responsibility will be his in case of mistake.

IV. War and Palavers

511 Life is easy for the Fan.

Close to his village, the great forest begins; it abounds in game, and he has not far to go to be able to shoot, at point-blank range, monkeys, antelopes, wild boars, even elephants. There are innumerable streams and rivers swarming with fish, especially carp; traps, weirs, nets, everything is good to catch them with -- everything succeeds. A Fan hunts and fishes when he feels like it; there are no laws interfering with his inclinations. Banana and manioc plantations, which provide the basic subsistence, give hardly any trouble. At the start of each season there are a few days of work at slashing-and-burning, the ashes providing fertilizer. After that, all the labor and care of the crops falls
517 upon the women. The Fan is therefore idle most of the day and